

# Renewable energy gets thumbs-up from Utahns

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Whether by wind, sun or bio-waste, Utahns overwhelmingly support tax breaks and state investment into alternative, renewable energy sources.

A new Deseret Morning News/KSL-TV poll shows that 87 percent of surveyed **Utah** residents strongly or somewhat favor renewable-energy tax credits, and 92 percent favor more investment in energy. The poll of 418 people was conducted by Dan Jones & Associates Jan. 2-4, and has a margin of error of 5 percent.

Those numbers could be reflected in the Legislature during its 2007 general session that begins today. Two bills have already been filed by Republican legislators offering tax breaks to alternative forms of power generation, and others have filed requests for bills offering some form of renewable-energy tax incentive.

Rep. Sheryl Allen, R-Bountiful, said that her HB30 will offer tax breaks for the installation of energy systems that utilize things like solar or wind power. The motivation is a rapidly increasing need to find ways to produce energy that is cleaner and more efficient.

"We are hearing more and more about greenhouse gases, and in my lifetime I have definitely seen climate change," she said. "We need to invest seriously in these renewable energies, and we need to do it now."

Sen. Howard Stephenson, R-Draper, said his SB13 will provide a tax break based on the amount of energy produced, without much focus on the initial cost of the system. The end result, however, would ideally be the same.

"It's important to have this tool to ensure that we have multiple sources of energy and are tapping into renewable energy," he said.

Stephenson hopes that the tax incentives could also provide a significant boost to the economies in rural Utah as large-scale projects, including such things as wind farms, would boost employment and generate tax revenue.

Possibly because of that potential economic benefit, residents outside of the Wasatch Front, with the exception of Salt Lake County, gave more support to both poll questions than those in the more urban areas.

In fact, 75 percent of those residents strongly supported more investment, while 59 percent of Utah County residents and 66 percent of Davis County residents strongly supported more investment. E-mail: [jloftin@desnews.com](mailto:jloftin@desnews.com)